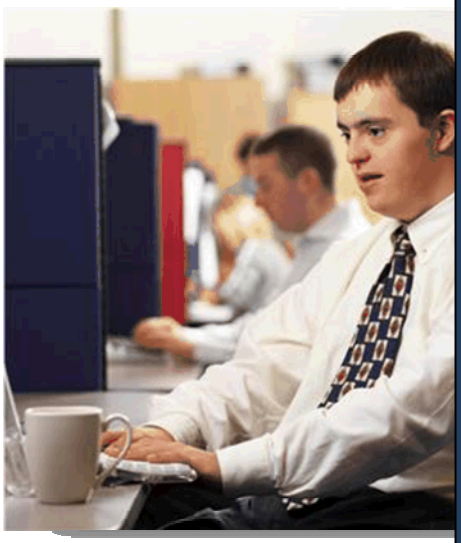
Secondary Transition Academy

Employment Training and Supports



Module 1

Disability Awareness, History of Education, and Employment Supports

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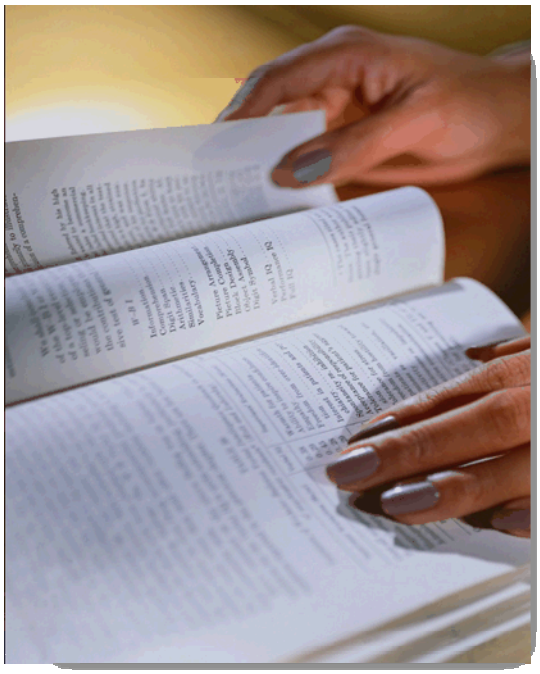
Disability Awareness and History of Education and Employment Supports

Module 1 is an introduction to supporting students with disabilities in secondary transition settings. Part I of the module is an overview of disability awareness. Specifically, it describes who is eligible for special education and related services, it describes how labels can lead to stereotypes of disabilities, and it describes how educators can better advocate for students with disabilities. Part II is a brief review of the legislation and history of secondary transition services for students with disabilities. Part III provides a discussion of the overall structure of adult employment programs and the importance of developing a community-based employment program for students with disabilities. After completing Module 1, you should be able to:



- Identify disability categories outlined in IDEA.
- Discuss how labels can negatively influence employment of people with disabilities.
- Describe people-first language.
- Describe why student confidentiality is important in a secondary transition program.
- Describe why local education agencies need to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities.
- Describe the outcomes of secondary transition planning.
- Describe the structure of adult service employment programs.
- Describe the current status of employment of people with disabilities.

Module 1 Contents

Part I: Overview of Disability

Paraeducators working in secondary transition settings are part of a unique team that provides educational and related services to students with disabilities. Under the direction of a certified special educator, paraeducators provide a wide array of supports to students with disabilities, including academic instruction, community-based instruction, and employment training. Many paraeducators discover that working with students with disabilities in a secondary transition setting can be both rewarding and can also be very challenging. The rewards come from helping students achieve their post-school goals and objectives, such as employment and independence. The challenges often stem from not knowing how to properly implement appropriate, meaningful, and individualized instructional strategies in community-based settings and not understanding the complicated array of post-school service available to students with disabilities. These challenges can be mitigated by taking time to learn about (1) the unique individual needs of students with disabilities, (2) provisions of transition planning as outlined in IDEA, and (3) learning more about the roles and responsibilities of adult service programs.

The first step, therefore, to providing comprehensive and individualized support to students with disabilities is to have basic understanding of the eligibility requirements for special education under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). To receive services and supports under IDEA, a student must be classified with one of the 13 disability conditions and need special education and related services in order to receive a *free and appropriate public education* (FAPE). Specific disabilities include autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation (defined as cognitive delay in Montana), multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment. Table 1.1 lists the IDEA definition for each category and disability specific web resources for each disability.

IDEA - Categories of Disability

Who is eligible for a free and appropriate education under IDEA 2004.

Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment

Table 1.1 Disability categories outlined in IDEA

Disability Categories Eligible for Services under IDEA		
Disability	**IDEA Description**	**Resource**
Autism	Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences (§300.8(c) (1)).	Autism Speaks http://www.autismspeaks.org/ Autism Society http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer National Autism Association http://www.nationalautismassociation.org/
Deaf-blindness	Deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness (§300.8(c) (2)).	National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness http://nationaldb.org/
Deafness	Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification that adversely affects a child's educational performance (§300.8(c) (3)).	NICHY Fact Sheet on Deafness http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/DeafnessandHearingLoss.aspx National Association of the Deaf http://www.nad.org/
Emotional Disturbance	Emotional disturbance means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance: (A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors. (B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers. (C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances. (D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. (E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (§300.8(c) 4)).	NICHY Fact Sheet on Emotional Disturbances http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/EmotionalDisturbance.aspx

Table 1. Disability categories outlined in IDEA (cont)

Disability	IDEA Description	Resource
Hearing Impairment	Hearing impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section (§300.8(c) (5)).	NICHY Fact Sheet on Deafness http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/DeafnessandHearingLoss.aspx National Association of the Deaf http://www.nad.org/
Mental Retardation	Mental retardation means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance (§300.8(c) (6)). ***While the term mental retardation is the term used in the Federal Regulation, advocates and organizations prefer the term Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities. Montana uses the term Cognitive Delay.***	AAID http://www.aamr.org/content_96.cfm?navID=20 NICHY Fact Sheet on Intellectual Disability http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/IntellectualDisability.aspx
Multiple Disabilities	Multiple disabilities means concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness or mental retardation-orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. Multiple disabilities does not include deaf-blindness (§300.8(c) (7)).	NICHY Fact Sheet on Multiple Disabilities http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/severe-multiple.aspx
Orthopedic Impairment	Orthopedic impairment means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures) (§300.8(c) (8)).	United Cerebral Palsy http://www.ucp.org/
Other Health Impairment	Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that-- (i) Is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette	Epilepsy Foundation http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/ National Tourette Syndrome Association http://www.tsa-usa.org/

Table 1. Disability categories outlined in IDEA (cont)

Disability	IDEA Description	Resource
	syndrome; and (ii) Adversely affects a child's educational performance (§300.8(c) (9)).	
Specific Learning Disability	Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. * Disorders not included. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.	NICHY Fact Sheet on Learning Disability http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/LD.aspx
Speech or Language Impairment	Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance (§300.8(c) (11)).	NICHY Fact Sheet on Speech and Language Impairment http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/speech-language.aspx
Traumatic Brain Injury	Traumatic brain injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Traumatic brain injury applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. Traumatic brain injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma (§300.8(c) (12)).	NICHY Fact Sheet on TBI http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/TBI.aspx TBI.com http://www.traumaticbraininjury.com/
Visual Impairment	Visual impairment, including blindness, means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness (§300.8(c) (13)).	NICHY Fact Sheet on Visual Impairment http://www.nichcy.org/Disabilities/Specific/Pages/VisualImpairment.aspx

Labels and Stereotypes

What are stereotypes associated with the label mental retardation or cognitive delay? Why do you believe these stereotypes exist?
Response:

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The IDEA uses categories and labels for identification and eligibility purposes; it is important, however, to recognize that these labels are only approximations of the specific characteristics of a disability. Each label is used primarily for diagnostic and placement decisions. Unfortunately, there are some unintended negative consequences to labeling and some educators, adult service providers, employers, and family members may have preconceived ideas or stereotypes about disability that are based on a label. As a result, they may purposely or inadvertently place unsubstantiated limitations on the student because of the disability label. That is, some individuals may believe that students with specific disabilities are incapable of performing certain activities and may only focus on what the student can't do rather than the student's strengths, interest, and goals.

The deficit-based limitations that professionals often place on students with disabilities are based on preconceived ideas or notions of what a student with a disability can accomplish. For example, consider the label mental retardation; this label is one of the 13 disability categories outlined in IDEA. When many people hear the term mental retardation, they automatically assume that a person with mental retardation cannot participate in inclusive educational or community-based employment because of his/her disability. They may also assume that because the student has mental retardation, he/she will be best served in more restrictive placements with more support. These assumptions are based on broad stereotypes about mental retardation and neither reflect the student's strengths and characteristics nor reflect how the student performs in various environments. Because of the negative stereotypes associated with the term mental retardation, many advocates and organizations are no longer using the term and now use the label "intellectual disabilities" (see AAIDD).

When supporting students with disabilities in school and community settings, it is important to remember that labels are ***NOT*** indicative of a student's ability to be successful in various inclusive settings. Just as no two people without disabilities are alike, no two people with disabilities are alike. Each student is unique and has his/her own strengths and interests. These strengths and interests need to be discovered and each student should be provided with capacity-building supports and individualized instruction to help individualized goals.

People First Language

You are in the faculty lounge taking a break. During your break, the dance education teacher asks you a few questions about her 5th period students. Specifically, she wanted to know the best way to teach the "Downs kids" in her classroom. How would you respond?

Response:

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People First Language

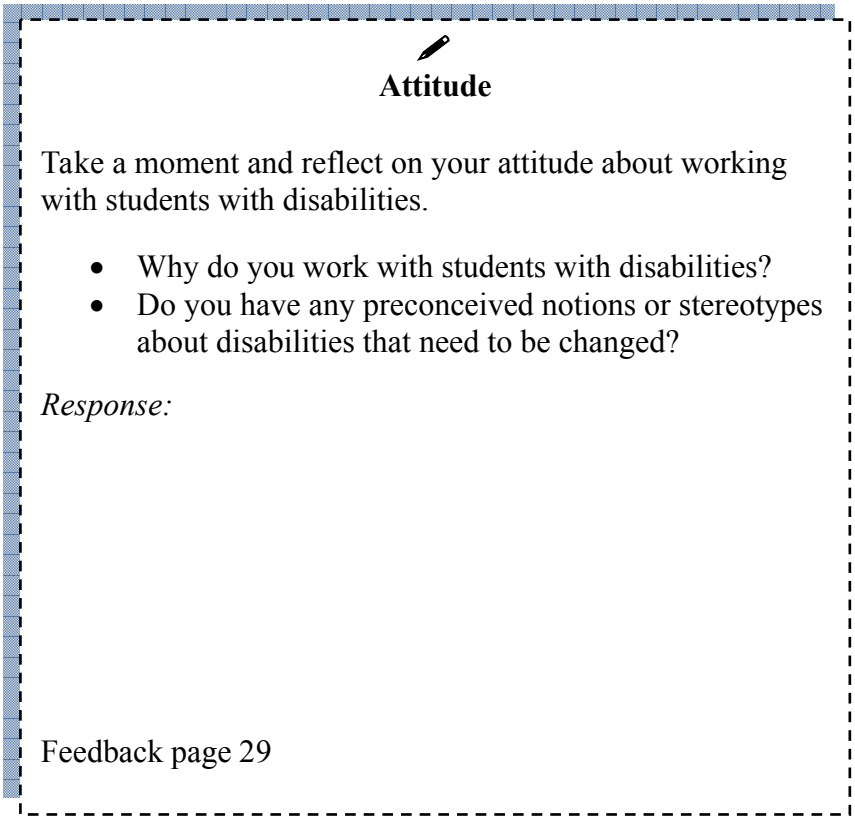
One of the easiest ways to separate a person from a label is to use people first language. People first language is a simple concept that is used to reduce negative stereotypes about people with disabilities. The underlying rationale behind people first language is that it recognizes that disability is part of the human condition; since disability is part of the human condition, we should always acknowledge the person first and the disability second. Below are some simple guidelines for using people first language:

- Always refer to the person first and only use the word disability if it is relevant to the conversation. Do not identify a student as "that down's kid" when you can identify him by name.
- Use the term disability instead of handicap. Handicap is an antiquated term that is considered offensive by many advocacy groups.
- When you need to identify a disability, avoid using negative descriptors of a student's disability. For example do not say "suffers from autism" or "afflicted with spina bifada."

- Do not use terms like "normal" or "able-body" to describe who do not have a disability. If you need to make comparisons say "students without disabilities."

Advocating for Students with Disabilities

There are roughly 373,466 paraeducators working with elementary and secondary students in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Each paraeducator interacts with a wide range of individuals in school and community settings and these interactions can potentially influence other students, teachers, and employer's perceptions of disability. Using people first language is the first step in becoming an advocate for students with disabilities.



In addition, support professionals should periodically reflect on their attitudes and values regarding disabilities. Self-reflection is important because attitudes and values influence how we interact, support, and listen to people with disabilities. For example, if a paraeducator working in a transition setting believes that students with more significant support needs are more appropriately served in segregated workshops, that paraeducator will have a hard time supporting a student at a community-based job. Therefore, both new and seasoned paraeducators, should periodically explore their attitudes and values regarding disabilities and determine what components need to be challenged or what attitudes need to be changed (see When the Moon Came Up). Luecking, Fabian, & Tilson (2004) identified several attitudes and values that are critical for professionals who support people with disabilities. Each of these attitudes and values can be a starting point for self-exploration and reflection about disability.

- *Communicate respect for the person with a disability.* In order to communicate respect, support professionals must have a fundamental belief that all individuals with disabilities have the right to determine their futures, make autonomous choices, and be partners in the learning process.
- *Believe in the individual's capacity to change and grow.* Support professionals can contribute to an individual's confidence by showing confidence in a person's ability to learn and try new tasks, self-direct, work independently, etc.
- *Demonstrate flexible attitude and willingness to change.* Support professional must be flexible and willing to adapt to new situations. That is, professionals will need to develop new strategies to support people with disabilities and be able to change strategies if they are not effective.
- *Maintain self-awareness.* Support professional need to monitor their own reactions to stressful or unfamiliar situations. They also need to be aware of how their own belief system may affect people with disabilities.

In sum, advocacy is a simple set of actions and beliefs that affects the way teachers, family members, employers, and other students interact with students with disabilities. Specific actions by people who support students with disabilities can positively or negatively impact outcomes the student achieves and can influence how others perceive disability.

Student Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that a student's education record remain confidential. In general, schools must obtain written permission from a parent or legal guardian in order to release any information from a student's education record. When a student is the "age of majority" or 18 years-old, the right to release education records transfers from the parent or guardian to the student. Information that may be considered confidential includes:

- Information regarding the student's disability
- Evaluation and assessment data

Web Resources for FERPA

U.S Department of Education
http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

- Psychological and medical records
- Information regarding the student's IEP
- Progress reports
- Personal or family information
- Disability classification

As a member of a student's education team, paraeducators may have access to some of the student information listed above. Because of this access, every paraeducator has personal and legal responsibility to maintain all aspects of student confidentiality. Paraeducators should only discuss relevant education information with members of the IEP team. When paraeducators are unsure of what violates student confidentiality they should consult with the certified teacher about the education records that may be reviewed.

Student Confidentiality

You have been working with a student who has significant support needs. Recently, he began to engage in self-injurious behavior (SIB) such as hand slapping and biting. This behavior is relatively new and you suspect that the increase in SIB is related to his decrease in medication. Your neighbor happens to be a pediatrician, so you talk to her about your suspicion. Does this violate student confidentiality? If yes, how can you address your concerns and still maintain student confidentiality**.**

Response:

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You are on your lunch break in the faculty lounge and one of your colleagues, who has 15 years experience, begins to talk about how her student Jeffrey is driving her crazy. She proceeds to tell you that his parents are getting a divorce and that she suspects domestic abuse is involved. She proceeds to tell you that Jeffrey seems to be acting out at his job site and his not making any progress on his work goals. How would you handle this situation?

Response:

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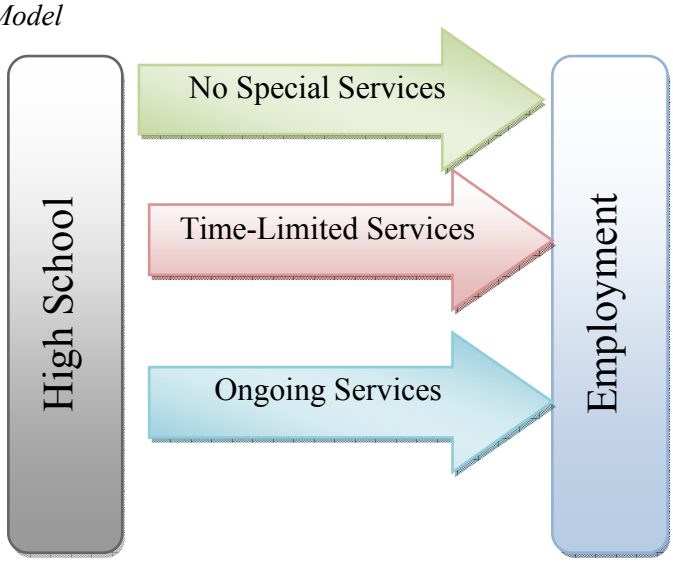
Part II: Legislation and History of Secondary Transition Planning

Since its inception in 1975, Part B of the Education of Handicapped Act (EAHCA) made free and appropriate public education (FAPE) available to students with disabilities who were previously excluded from public school. After the passage of the Act, students with disabilities were provided with special education and related services; however, many of these students did not properly adjust to the demands of postschool adult living. Consequently, in 1984 the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), under the direction of Madeline Will, issued a paper titled OSERS Programming for the Transition of Youth with Disabilities: Bridges from School to Working Life (Will, 1984). Will defined transition from school to working life as:

> an outcome-oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment. Transition is a period that includes high school, the point of graduation, additional post-secondary education or adult services, and the initial years in employment. Transition is a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the opportunities and risks of adult life (p.2).

Will developed a five-part model to illustrate the major components of the transition process. The five-part model was conceptualized as a way of organizing school activities and plans to improve the efficacy of the transition process for all students with disabilities (figure 1.1).

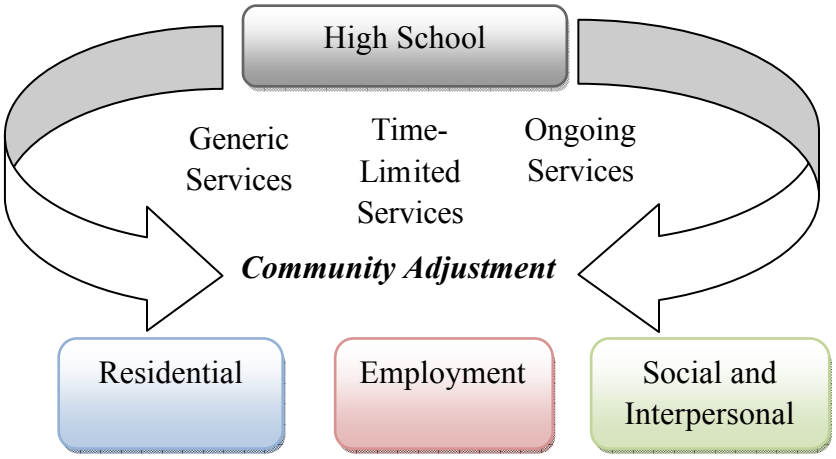
Figure 1.1. Bridges Model



High school and employment were the foundations of the OSERS model and three "bridges" from school to employment were developed to support a student's movement from school to working life. These bridges served as a pathway for individuals to access employment and specific transition-related services; they include (a) no special services, (b) time-limited services and (c) ongoing services. In essence, the bridges model established a conceptual framework for transition services and sought to improve the transition planning and coordination across different agencies.

While Will's model was an important platform from which early federal transition initiatives were developed, it only focused on employment as an outcome. Subsequent transition models suggested that secondary transition programs should not exclusively focus on employment as an outcome.

Figure 1.2. Halpern Transition Model.



Rather, professionals working in secondary transition programs should use an ecological approach to instruction that is designed to prepare students to adjust to the demands of the community. In response, Halpern (1985) developed a model of transition services that suggested that schools develop comprehensive transition programs that focus on broader transition outcomes that prepared students for community adjustment. These outcomes include developing employment skills,

Web Resources for Transition

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)
http://www.ncset.org/

ED.gov IDEA Website
http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home

developing social and interpersonal skills, and developing residential skills. These models were developed in response to the poor post-school student outcomes.

In 1990, Congress amended the Education of the Handicapped Children Act and renamed it the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and responded to the need to develop transition policy. For the first time in the statute, Congress explicitly addressed school district responsibilities for student transition from school to adult life. The statute required that a student with disabilities' Individualized Education Program (IEP) contain a statement of transition services.

Even with the provision of transition services outlined in IDEA, there still remains a discrepancy between valued outcomes and the actual outcomes that are being achieved by many students with disabilities. This discrepancy has prompted researchers to focus on describing the relationship between transition practices and postsecondary outcomes. Subsequent transition models, therefore, emphasized a need to view transition not as discrete activities but rather a process that leads to student-specific post-school outcomes. For example, Kohler (1996) developed a taxonomy for transition programming that delineated several practices or components. The first component is *student-focused planning* that includes student participation, IEP development, and accommodations and planning strategies. The second component is *student development* that includes life skill instruction, employment skills instruction, career and vocational curricula, structured work experiences, vocational assessment, and accommodation and support strategies. The third component is *interagency collaboration,* including individual-level planning, interagency agreements, coordination of transition service delivery, and resource allocation. The fourth component is *family involvement,* including family training, family empowerment, and family participation. The final component is *program structure,* including program philosophy, program policy, strategic planning, program evaluation, and resource allocation. These practices form the foundation of a transition focused education. When conducted in isolation these tasks will not necessarily lead to improved outcomes, but when they are incorporated into the transition planning process, the student will achieve individualized outcomes.

IDEA Definition of Transition Services

According to IDEA, a written Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be developed for each student eligible for special education and related services. The IDEA requires that several transition-related components be included in each student's IEP. First,

IDEA 2004 Definition of Transition

The term "transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:

(1) Is designed to be a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(2)Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and

(3)Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

beginning no later than the first IEP that is in effect when the child is 16 and updated annually, the IEP must develop (1) appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills; (2) describe the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals; and (3) beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under state law, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under Part B, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority.

Secondary Transition Outcomes

Researchers have come to a general consensus about the post-school outcomes that are important for students with moderate to severe disabilities. These outcomes can be delineated into several outcome categories that include paid employment, life skills, including independent living and creating integrated social and recreational opportunities, and self advocacy/self-determination. Developing instruction for each of these outcomes is an important part of a student's transition plan**.**

Employment. A fundamental component of exemplary transition-planning is preparing students with disabilities for competitive, integrated employment. When viewed holistically, integrated, competitive employment affords individuals with disabilities the opportunity to fully participate in community environments, develop social networks, and develop a sense of empowerment. Competitive employment is not only a key post-school outcome for students with mild to moderate disabilities, but it is also a key outcome for students with severe

disabilities. In fact, these students are being competitively employed, with greater frequency, through supported employment (Wehman, Inge & Revell, 2007).

Life Skills. Life skills encompass a broad range of transition outcomes that can be broadly defined as preparing students to meet the diverse demands of adult living. Accordingly, transition programs must assist and support students with (1) developing and maintaining a network of friends and acquaintances, (2) developing and promoting appropriate social skills, (3) participating in appropriate community leisure and recreation activities, (4) participating in life at home, and (5) participating in integrated community environments.

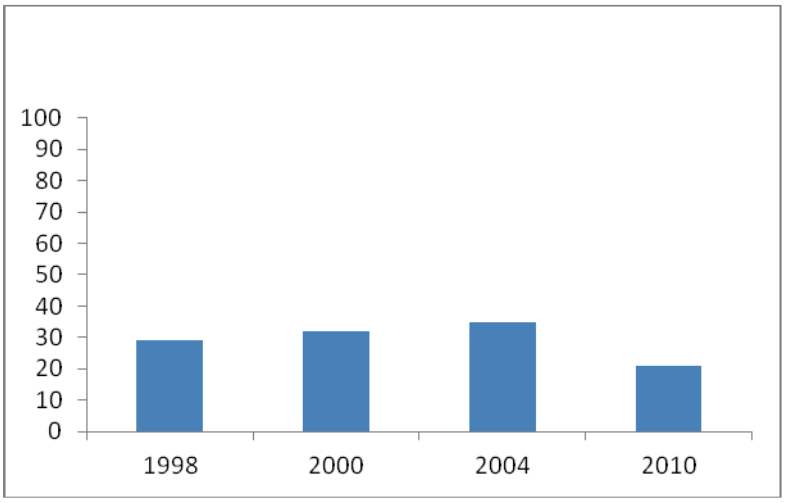
Self-advocacy/Self-Determination. A final outcome of transition planning is self-advocacy/self-determination. Self-determination refers to a person making informed, autonomous choices based on his or her personal preferences. Students with disabilities who are self-determined are able to articulate their long and short-term goals, develop plans to achieve these goals, solve problems, and exercise more control over their lives. Over the years, promoting self-determination has gained considerable attention and has been found to be directly linked to an individual with disabilities' overall quality of life (Wehmeyer & Shwartz, 1998).

Part III: What Happens to Students after Transition

The need for comprehensive transition planning is continually reinforced by poor post-school outcomes, such as underemployment of chronic unemployment, of many students with disabilities. According to the National Organization on Disability, Harris survey (2010), only 21 percent of people with disabilities report being employed full or part time; people with disabilities are twice as likely to have inadequate transportation; people with disabilities are less likely to socialize, eat out, or attend religious services than their non-disabled counterparts; people with disabilities are twice as likely to drop out of high school; and people with disabilities are much more likely to live in poverty with annual household incomes below $15,000. Unfortunately, many students with more significant support needs often face even poorer post-school outcomes (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005).

These data suggest that secondary transition programs face significant challenges with developing a coordinated set of activities that lead to successful inclusive employment outcomes. The IDEA continually reinforces the need for transition programs to address this problem and requires schools to develop plans to facilitate employment or supported employment for students with disabilities. Therefore, it is critical that individuals working in transition programs have a clear understanding of the types of employment support services available to students when they exit school. Information about post-school support options needs to be clearly articulated to the student and his or her family so an individualized employment plan can be developed.

Figure 1.1. Percent of people working full or part-time jobs.



Structure of Adult Service Supports

There are two types of employment supports typically available to individuals with disabilities; time-limited services or long-term supports. Time-limited services are funded by vocational rehabilitation (see Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Services) and include job assessment, job placement, and job training and support. Unlike special education, services like vocational rehabilitation are not guaranteed to students when they graduate. The vocational rehabilitation process begins when a student makes application and is found eligible for rehabilitation services. Once a student is found eligible, he or she will be assigned a counselor who helps coordinate employment services and helps develop an individualized plan for employment. The student will then be allocated a number of support hours and vocational rehabilitation will vend for services with local community rehabilitation providers (CRP) who provide the direct employment support. Because vocational rehabilitation is a time-limited service, the student's case will eventually close regardless of the employment outcomes.

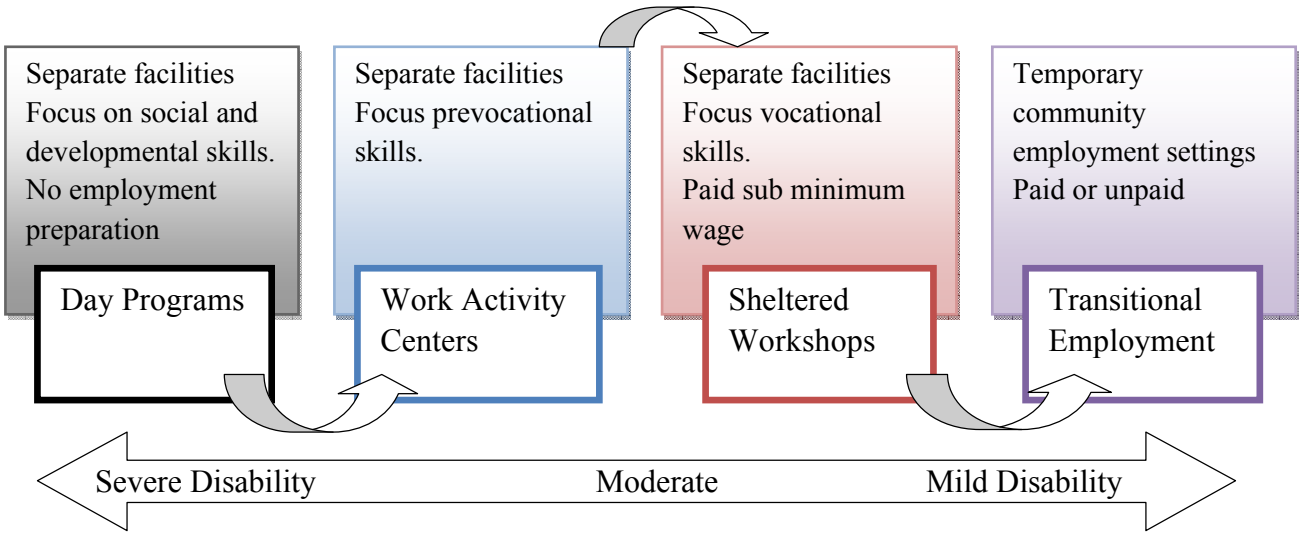
Long-term supports are typically provided by the state Developmental Disability Program of the Montana Department of Health and Human Service *(see Montana Department of Public*

Health and Human Services and provide not only employment supports but living supports; these supports are intended to be long term and may last indefinitely. Typically, individuals who receive long-term supports have funding through developmental disabilities services.

Continuum of Services

The structure of adult services is largely based on a *continuum of services*. The continuum of employment services is conceptualized as a way to teach people with disabilities requisite prevocational skills that lead to employment. The underlying principle of the continuum is that intensive interventions for people with severe disabilities can be more effectively delivered in more restrictive and controlled environments.

Figure 1.3. Illustration of the Continuum of Services



Less intensive services for people with less support needs can be delivered in least restrictive environments. Therefore, in the continuum model, individuals are placed in a variety of settings based on 'the persons achievement of certain developmental milestones or the perceived support needs of the individual. Continuum placements include day programs, work activity centers, sheltered workshops, inclusive employment. Day programs are separate facilities for people with more significant disabilities; there is no focus on employment preparation. Typically, individuals in day programs receive assistance with social and development skills. Work activity centers are separate facilities that focus on prevocational skills. Many of the tasks performed in these settings are simulated and do not resemble actual jobs. Sheltered workshops are segregated settings where the individual learns vocational skills. Tasks in sheltered workshops are often repetitive and can include assembly work. Individuals are typically paid a piece rate or

subminimum wage for the work they perform. Transitional employment is a series of temporary placements in the community to assess employment skills. These placements can either be paid or unpaid.

Movement in the continuum is based on the ability of the person with a disability to perform prevocational skills. Once an individual demonstrates that he or she possess these prevocational skills, he or she can transition to a less restrictive employment preparation setting. As illustrated in the figure above, individuals with severe disabilities are typically placed in more restrictive settings while individuals with mild to moderate disabilities are placed in least restrictive settings. Unfortunately, the skills that are often taught in the settings described above are often simulated and do not resemble actual community-based jobs. Consequently, the individual may be learning a prevocational skill that he or she will not be able to generalize to an actual performance setting. This training approach does not necessarily prepare people with disabilities for the demands of community-based employment because research has shown that individuals with severe disabilities need to be provided instruction and support in the actual performance environments (Horner, McDonnell, & Bellamy, 1986; Westling & Fox, 2000), In addition, development of social skills is also impeded when individuals with disabilities are placed in sheltered programs because they have less exposure to real-life social interactions. Finally, one of the greatest shortcomings of facilities-based programs is that few people move from these settings to inclusive employment. In fact, research has shown that once an individual with a disability is placed in a sheltered setting, his or her chances of transitioning to inclusive employment is near zero (Zivolich, 1991). Recent data also indicate that placement of individuals with disabilities in segregated workshop (365,000 nationally) settings outpaces placement in inclusive programs (118,000 nationally), such as supported employment (Braddock, Rizzolo, & Hemp, 2004) and long-term funding for

Problems with the Continuum of Services

Generalization – inability to transfer skills learn in one environment to another environment.

Socialization – Social skills development is often diminished in more restrictive settings because individuals with disabilities are not real life social interactions.

Movement – It is highly unlikely that a individual with a disability will move to more inclusive placements when he/she is placed in either a day program, work activity center, or shelter workshop.

segregated programs is nearly four times higher than funding for supported employment (Rusch & Braddock, 2004).

Inclusive Employment Support Options

Supported employment emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to sheltered workshops and traditional employment support models. The development of supported employment was influenced by the fact the segregated employment programs and conventional employment did not produce quality outcomes for people with disabilities. Consequently, advocates, researchers and policy makers wanted to abandon the "train-place" model for vocational preparation that used a continuum and began to develop innovated methods to support an individual with significant support needs in the competitive labor market.

Supported employment has a number of defining characteristics and values that have guided supported employment efforts over the years.

- ***Individuality.*** Individuals with disabilities should not be grouped together based on diagnosis, functioning level, or availability of supports. Rather, service must be designed from an individualized perspective taking into account the individual strengths and preferences.
- ***Inclusion in the workplace.*** Supported employment is a community-based program that assumes people do not have to earn the right to work. Supported employment is a strength-based model that assumes individuals learn best and can excel in inclusive communities.
- ***Choice and autonomy.*** Effective supported employment programs provide people with disabilities the opportunity to make independent career decisions. This includes selecting a service provider or employment specialist, accepting or declining a specific job, and deciding to terminate a position.
- ***Commensurate wages and benefits.*** Individuals participating in supported employment are paid similar wages and are provided similar benefits as people without disabilities.
- ***Flexible/ongoing support.*** In order to maintain employment, ongoing support is provided to supported employees. Supports may be initially intensive and then they will gradually fade to natural levels as the supported employee gains the skills and

confidence necessary to complete the job. Support should be both formal and informal.

Different supported employment placement models have emerged over the years, including the individual placement model, enclave model, and mobile work crew model. The individual placement is the most preferred placement model and is designed to provide support to a single individual who works in a local business. The supported employee receives 1:1 support by an employment specialist and once the supported employee gains more confidence and independence, the support is gradually faded to natural levels. The enclave model consists of a small group placement (less than 8) of individuals who work in a host business. These businesses often include manufacturing plants, hotels, and large businesses. Direct training and supervision are provided by an on-site supervisor and does not fade from the individual. The mobile work crew is comprised of a group of six or fewer individuals who are trained and supervised by a paid crew leader. The mobile work crew contracts with local business to provide services such as janitorial services and landscaping. The business typically pays the community service provider for the service and wages are dispersed to the supported employee.

Supported Employment Models

Individual placement. The supported employee receives 1:1 support by an employment specialist and once the supported employee gains more confidence and independence, the support is gradually faded to natural levels.

Enclave. A small group placement (less than 8) of individuals who work in a host business. These businesses often include manufacturing plants, hotels, and large businesses. Direct training and supervision is provided by an on-site supervisor and does not fade from the individual.

Mobile work crew. A group of six or fewer individuals who are trained and supervised by a paid crew leader. The mobile work crew contracts with local business to provide services such as janitorial services and landscaping.

Currently, many secondary transition programs structure their programs to prepare students for supported employment positions following graduation. This approach is based on the assumptions that supported employment programs serve individuals with the most significant disabilities and that these programs are readily available to recent graduates. While conceptually supported employment was created for individuals with more significant support needs, in reality individuals with more significant support needs are the least likely to receive supported

employment services (Mank et al, 1998; West, Revell, & Wehman, 1992). To address this disparity, policy makers and research have developed a strategy called customized employment.

Customized employment builds on the strengths of supported employment in that it requires that the employment process be individualized and tailored to the strengths and needs of the individual. Customized employment is different than supported employment in that it is not based on the demands of the local job market. That is, supported employment programs typically look for existing, market-driven jobs where an individual with a disability can perform all of the essential functions of the job. Customized employment, on the other hand, seeks to establish a mutual relationship between the job seeker and an employer by carving, modifying, restructuring, or negotiating a specific job. The customized job meets the unique needs of the individual and it increases productivity for the employer. The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP, 2005) established a set of customized employment principles that illustrate the process. First, the employer voluntarily negotiates specific job duties or principles. Second, the negotiated employment relationship meets both the unique needs, strengths, and interests of the employee and the discrete needs of the employer. Third, the job seeker is the primary source of information and decides the direction in which to explore the job market, the job seeker controls the planning process that captures his/her preferences, interests, and connections in the community. Finally, exploratory time is essential to uncover the job seeker's unique needs, abilities, and interests.

Customized Employment

"Customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. It is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer. It may include employment developed through job carving, self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives, or other job development or restructuring strategies that result in job responsibilities being customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of individuals with a disability" (Federal Register, 2002. p. 4356).

Summary

Because employment is an important part of the post-school adjustment for students with disabilities, it is important for paraeducators to understand the history of transition planning for students with disabilities. It is also important to understand the provisions of transition planning outlined in IDEA; these provision support the notion that students with disabilities should

participate in employment planning and training. Finally, paraeducators should have a basic understanding of the structure of adult services programs so that they can assist the certified teacher with developing the supports necessary to help students achieve their employment-related post-school goals and objectives.

Key Terms

Day Program	Day programs are center-based placements for people with disabilities. Individual are provided instruction on activities of daily living and social and motor skills.
Continuum of Employment Supports	The continuum of employment supports consists of a series of placements for people with disabilities. These placements include day programs, work activity centers, sheltered workshops, and transitional employment. The continuum assumes that people need to demonstrate prerequisite skills before a move to more inclusive environments
Customized Employment	Customized employment is an individualized approach to employment placement that seeks to establish a mutual benefit between the employer and the job seeker. Jobs are individually negotiated.
IDEA	The federal law that made a free and appropriate public education available to students with disabilities. The law was first enacted in 1975 and was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990.
FERPA	The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) stipulates that a student's education record remains confidential.
Generalization	The ability to perform tasks in untrained settings.
Sheltered Workshops	A center-based placement that focus on prevocational and vocational skills. Individuals are typically paid a piece-rate or sub-minimum wage.
Supported Employment	Supported employment is an employment service option that abandons the continuum of employment supports and assumes that people with disabilities learn better in paid, real work experiences. Supported employment has several support options: *Individual placement* – The individual placement option is the most preferred. The option places a person with a disability in paid employment with one-on-one support. Support is gradually faded as the individual acquires the necessary job skills. *Enclave* – In the option individuals work in enclaves consisting of 6-8 individuals. There is an enclave supervisor who provides continuous support. *Mobile work crew* – Mobile work crews consist of fewer than six individuals who perform contract work in the community. Mobile work

	crews have continuous support that does not fade.
Time-limited Supports	Time-limited supports are short-term supports designed to assist people with disabilities to find and maintain work. Vocational Rehabilitation is considered time-limited.
Transitional Employment	A series of temporary employment placements designed to prepare a person with a disability for work.
Transition	The term transition refers to the process of preparing students for post-school activities such as independent living, employment, recreation and leisure, post-secondary education. Transition plans must be in effect no later than the first IEP that is in effect when the child is 16.
Transition Plan	A component of a student's IEP that contains appropriate measurable post-secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills.
Work Activity Centers	A center-based placement that focuses on teaching individuals certain activities designed to increase work capacity.

Test Review

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True or False

True	False	Transition must be addressed in an IEP no later than students first IEP that is in effect when the student is 16.
True	False	Student educational records are protected under FERPA.
True	False	"John suffers from blindness" is an example of people first language.
True	False	IDEA was first enacted in 1990.
True	False	Customized employment is an individualized approach to employment supports that seek to establish a mutual benefit between the job seeker and the employer.
True	False	Early transition models only focused on employment as a transition outcome.
True	False	Mobile work crews are an appropriate placement in supported employment.
True	False	Vocational rehabilitation is intended to be long-term.
True	False	Generalization refers to the ability to perform tasks in untrained settings.
True	False	Generalization refers to the student's ability to perform in untrained settings.

Multiple Choice

Which statement characterizes *sheltered workshops*?

a. A center-based placement that focuses on prevocational and vocational skills. Individuals are typically paid a piece-rate or sub-minimum wage.
b. A center-based placement that focuses on teaching individuals certain activities designed to increase work capacity.
c. A series of temporary employment placements designed to prepare a person with a disability for work.
d. Center-based placements for people with disabilities. Provide instruction on activities of daily living and social and motor skills.

According to provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, schools are required to:

a. Keep student education records confidential.
b. Obtain a release of information for students who are over 18.
c. Obtain a release of information from parents of students under 18.

d. All of the above.

Which option is not considered a supported employment model?

a. Mobile work crew
b. Sheltered workshop
c. Individual placement
d. Enclave

Vocation rehabilitation is considered what type of service?

a. Ongoing
b. Time-limited
c. Guaranteed
d. Entitled

Which disability is not eligible for special education and related services?

a. Autism
b. TBI
c. Mental retardation or cognitive delay
d. Learning disability
e. Emotional disturbance
f. Carpal tunnel syndrome

How many disabilities are eligible for special education and related services?

a. 8
b. 14
c. 16
d. None of the above

What year did IDEA require individual education plans to have a statement of transition services.

a. 1975
b. 1986
c. 1990
d. 2002

According to IDEA, transition is designed to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including:

a. Postsecondary education
b. Vocational education
c. Integrated employment (including supported employment)
d. Continuing and adult education
e. All of the above

Reflection Box Feedback

Box 1: What are some common stereotypes associated with the label cognitive delay or mental retardation? Why do you believe these stereotypes exist?

Feedback:

There are many stereotypes associated with the label cognitive delay or mental retardation. Some of the common stereotypes are:

People who are cognitively delayed are object of pity. That is, they need to have special treatment.
People who are cognitively delayed cannot learn new skills.
People who are cognitively delayed can't work.
People who are cognitively delayed can't participate in the regular education classroom, they need special classrooms to effectively learn new skills.
People who are cognitively delayed can't make choices or answer for themselves.
People who are cognitively delayed need to be spoken to slowly.

Stereotypes about cognitive delay and mental retardation are the result of media images and portrayals of people with disabilities, years of segregated practices that prevent people with disabilities from participating in inclusive educational and community environments, and a general lack of disability awareness.

Box 2: You are in the faculty lounge taking a break. During your break, the dance education teacher asks you a few questions about some of her 5th period students. Specifically, she wanted to know the best way to teach the "Downs kids" in her classroom. How would you respond?

Feedback:

People outside of the special education/human service field probably haven't heard of people first language. In this situation, the dance teacher probably did not know that referring to her student as that "down's kid" could be negative. Therefore, you could politely explain to the teacher what people first language is and why it is important to use it.

Box 3: Take a moment and reflect on your attitude about working with students with disabilities.

Why do you work with students with disabilities?
Do you have any preconceived notions or stereotypes about disabilities that need to be changed?

Feedback:

We all work with people with disabilities for various reasons; perhaps we have a family member who has a disability, perhaps we have a neighbor who has a disability, or perhaps we simply like to provide support to people with disabilities. Whatever the reasons for working with people with disabilities, we need to continually reflect on the reasons why we choose this profession and continually strive to deliver services and supports in a professional and dignified manner.

Box 4. You have been working with a student who has significant support needs. Recently, he began to engage in self-injurious behavior (SIB) such as hand slapping and biting. This behavior is relatively new and you suspect that the increase in SIB is related to his decrease in medication. Your neighbor happens to be a pediatrician, so you talk to her about your suspicion. Does this violate student confidentiality? If yes, how can you address your concerns and still maintain student confidentiality.

Feedback:

It is important that you address the recent increase in self-injurious behavior. While you had good intentions talking to you neighbor about your medical concerns, it clearly violated student confidentiality. You need to address your concerns by talking to the certified teacher about the recent increase in behavior. You and the teacher may want to keep track of the frequency and intensity of the behavior and convene a team meeting to discuss how to decrease the SIB.

You are on your lunch break in the faculty lounge and one of your colleagues, who has been a paraeducator for 15 years, begins to talk about how her student Jeffrey is driving her crazy. She proceeds to tell you that his parents are getting a divorce and that she suspects domestic abuse is involved. She proceeds to tell you that Jeffrey seems to be acting out at his job site and is not making any progress on his work goals. How would you handle this situation?

Feedback:

Working with students with disabilities can be challenging and as a result educators often look to their colleagues to vent and discuss issues they may be having with students. However, because personal and educational records are confidential, your colleague should not be talking to you about the divorce and educational performance of her student. As such, you should simply tell the colleague that she needs to address her concerns to the certified teacher.

Secondary Transition Resources

Internet Resources

IDEA (2004) Regulations Related to Transition.
http://www.dcdt.org/cms_files/resources/IDEA2004.pdf

National Longitudinal Transition Study 2. http://www.nlts2.org/

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. http://www.ncset.org/

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center. http://www.worksupport.com/

Office of Disability Employment Policy. http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/custom/index.htm

Disability is Natural. http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/

Transition Toolbox. http://transition-toolbox.pluk.org/

Transition and Employment Projects. http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/default.asp

Books

McDonnell, J., & Hardman, M. (2010). *Successful transition programs: Pathways for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Los Angles: Sage. (Web Link)

Wehman, P., Inge, K.J., Revell, G. W., & Brook, V. A. (Eds). *Real Work for Real Pay: Inclusive Employment for People with Disabilities*. Baltimore: Brookes. (Web Link)

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